



# May 2011 Newsletter

<b>Affiliations</b> American Orchid Society The Orchid Digest	<b>Proud Supporter of</b> 5 Cities Homeless Coalition
<b>President: Chris Ehrler</b>	<b>Vice President: Danny Stocks</b>
<b>Secretary: Anne Bachmann</b>	<b>Treasurer: Christina Holenda</b>
<b>Directors at Large: Larry Vierheilg, Scott St. Clair and Rosemary Bradshaw</b>	
<b>Newsletter Editor: Anne Bachmann</b>	

## **Our Next Meeting (Danny Stocks)**

This month our speaker will be Ken Jacobsen. He will be speaking on Cymbidium Seedling Surprises. Although the focus is on cymbidiums, the lessons learned and concepts can be applied to most common orchid genera. Ken was first introduced to orchids by his uncle in the 1960's and has been growing Cymbidiums himself for over 40 years. Over time, he has added the Odontoglossum alliance plants and several other genera. Since his wife Amy joined in his orchid addiction, they now also raise Cattleyas and Laelias, Lycastes, Encyclias, Vandas, and Masdevallias. Together they even have a few Disas! Their collection now numbers over 2500 Cymbidiums, and about another 2500 of the other genera.

Ken is a judge in the AOS judging program and heads the CSA judging program. He has written many articles for the CSA Journal. He is very knowledgeable and we are very fortunate that he can come down and speak to us. If you have any questions about cymbidiums or any orchids for that matter, bring them to the meeting and he will be more than happy to answer them for you.

Ken will be providing the plant table for the meeting. Sounds like he is going to be bringing cymbidiums. He said he would try to bring some blooming cymbidiums but it is getting late in the season. He will probably bring his personal crosses so it is our chance to get some one of a kind plants.

We are going to take Ken and his wife Amy to dinner at the Quarterdeck. Dinner will be before our meeting at 5:30. If you are interested in having dinner with us call me (Dan Stocks 481-7511) and I will add you to the dinner reservation.

## **February Meeting Summary (Chris Ehrler)**

One of our members Jeffrey Thompson spoke to the group at the April meeting about sleuthing orchids and where to find information on how to grow orchids. Turns out he feels he is now in his 4<sup>th</sup> beginnings with orchids having started three other times with varying success but for one reason or another stopped in the first

three attempts. He handed out a two page summary of information of things he has learned over the years. He said that you need to learn the language of **ORCHIDESE** which he found to be a difficult language to learn. He said the only way to learn it was by listening, reading, and finally trying to talk it (sounds like a normal foreign language to me). The speaking it came after being asked to participate in group discussions and culture demos which forced him to figure what he knew and did not know based on the questions that were asked. He said there are lots of places to look for information: orchid society meetings, special meetings like Orchid Digest and AOS and their publications and books, and the internet. His handout gave a list of websites he has found to be informative plus software you can purchase. He is storing a lot of information about his orchids on his computer so he can figure out if they grow better or worse when he changes their culture. He also suggested that the most important thing to do is to watch your plants as they are growing (hopefully) and make adjustment to their care if they are not looking good and growing well.

## **President's Message (Chris Ehrler)**

I would like to begin by letting you know about a great opportunity you all have to purchase a great orchid. As many of you know Sunset Valley Orchids donated a [Fdk. After Dark 'SVO Black Pearl' FCC/AOS](#) along with two bottles of wine to the 5Cities Homeless Coalition weekend raffle at our show. Turns out the person whose ticket was drawn as the winner of this prize was only interested in the wine and not the orchid so they left the orchid with me. So, I decided to raffle it to the highest bidder. **The orchid is worth \$100** (yes \$100 - check out their website) and I already have a bid of \$40. If you would like to bid on this plant send in your bid to [ehrlr4@juno.com](mailto:ehrlr4@juno.com) and the person with the highest bid will win. All email bids must reach me by May 20. If two people send in bids that are the highest and match each

other, the one whose email I receive first will win. **So bid soon.** The money will go to the Homeless Coalition.

A description of the orchid from Fred Clarke's website follows: SVO Black Pearl is the best of the 'black flowered' types. When mature, it produces 2-4 pendant inflorescences per bulb carrying 15-22 flowers each. It is one of the best growers and bloomers of the grex and flowers last 6-7 weeks. These are clones and are blooming size. It has won multiple First Class Certificates from the American Orchid Society.

I want to once again thank all those that helped make this year's show a success. Many people who had never seen orchids before were amazed at the displays and orchids and all of those in attendance saw many orchids they have not seen before. Thanks especially to Eric Holenda, Bonnie Warring, and the rest of the show committee for the many hours they devoted over the last 12 months to help make the show move along as smoothly as possible. They had such a good time that they are already planning for next year's 17<sup>th</sup> annual show. So keep your orchids happy so that they will be bigger and better for next year's show. You should also begin to generate your list of show theme names as we will be asking soon for your names.

By now you should be seeing new roots and new growths on most of your orchids. With the weather warming up, you need to make sure you are keeping your orchid media moist but not real wet all the time. It usually takes some experimenting to figure out how often to water and then about the time you think you have it figured out, the weather will change and you get to adjust your schedule. Remember as they start to grow faster they will usually require more frequent watering. This is also a great time to check the media in each of the pots to make sure it has not "broken down" and turned into a muddy consistency. If so, you need to transplant right away as the roots need both moisture and air and when the media has broken down the roots will no longer be getting adequate air movement and those roots will die. If you are not sure, do not be afraid to turn the pot over and have the orchid root mass come out of the pot and check to see what it looks like. If the media looks okay, then drop the root ball back into the pot or increase the size of pot and add more media. If the orchid has filled the pot and needs a larger one or if it looks muddy, then wash off the old media and add new to a clean pot.

Hope to see you at the May FCOS meeting.

#### **Additional Words from Fellow Orchid Enthusiasts**

**Danny Stocks** - As many of you know I am trying to build a greenhouse in my backyard. Over a year ago I poured a foundation. The project has stalled due to lack of funds. I know what I want to do but really do not have the knowledge on how to get it from my head to being built. I have talked to people I know with greenhouses (Eric, Larry and Chris) about what they have and how they built them.

Recently I met Ralph Kashima. He is a premiere cymbidium breeder and grower. He has a couple of shade houses for growing his cymbidiums. This winter several sheets of fiberglass blew off of the roof of his stud plant shade house. I came up with a great idea. I would help Ralph replace the fiberglass on the roof of his shade house. It would be win win. Ralph would get his roof replaced and I would learn valuable lessons on building greenhouses and as a bonus I could be learning more about growing cymbidiums. First I had to convince Ralph. This wasn't very hard because he is really easy going and he really could use the help.

We made arrangements and the day arrived. I showed up at his place with my tool belt on ready to go to work. It seemed to be about a days worth of work. The first thing we did was replace one of the roof beams. No problem. Next was putting the fiberglass panels back up. Putting corrugated fiberglass sheets on a new roof seems fairly easy. You start at one end and finish at the other. It is a whole different story putting them in the middle of the roof. Once you put the sheet in the hole, it is surrounded by other sheets so it is impossible to nail down. Ralph told me the way to nail them down was to roll the sheet and unroll it as you nail. That worked okay until you get to the last edge. It was a slow long process. At the end of the day I thought we would be finished but as it turned out we were exactly half finished. We made arrangements to finish in a couple of days. Driving home I was tired and dirty but happy. I had learned how to cut, place and nail fiberglass. That night I learned another valuable lesson. Fiberglass is itchy. Even though I had scrubbed in the shower, once I got in bed under the covers I could still feel the fiberglass on my arms. It was a long night.

The second day I was really ready. I showed up with my tool belt but also had on a long sleeved shirt and gloves. I also had a great idea. I brought an eight foot by two foot piece of plywood. My idea was I would place the plywood across two beams and sit on the plywood to nail down the sheets of fiberglass. The sheets would be easier to nail down because I would not have to roll them and my arms would have less contact with the fiberglass. My weight would be spread out between two beams so I would not fall through the roof. Sounds great.

The first sheet was next to the edge and my idea worked. I put the sheet on in record time. I did have one small boo boo. Have you seen in the movies where the carpenter grabs several nails and puts the ends in his mouth? Well with gloves on it is really hard to get the nails out of the nail bag so I had a few in my hand and put them in my mouth. With gloves on it is really hard to find your mouth too. Ok, I totally missed my mouth. I stuck one of the points of the nails into my upper lip. Actually it was above

my lip. Fortunately no one saw it and I wasn't bleeding. After a few minutes, I could feel something running into my mouth. I wiped it with the back of my hand and it was blood. I kept wiping it off hoping Ralph wouldn't notice.

The next sheet was more in the middle. I placed my plywood and scooted out onto it. Did I mention I was working over Ralph's stud plants? I put in about three nails down the beam that the plywood was resting on and I was thinking we would be done before lunch. The forth nail, oh the forth nail. I was nailing the forth nail into the beam and the nail going into the beam caused the beam to snap. It was under too much stress to hold my weight. It is a good thing for me that Ralph's shade house is only about eight feet tall. The beam failed and I rode my plywood and the fiberglass to the floor. Okay not really to the floor. Ralph's stud plants broke my fall. Fortunately, none of the stud plants I landed on had seed pods or were in spike. But several of the plants were crushed. I felt really bad but Ralph took it in stride. He said he had heard about people falling through greenhouse roofs and now he knew someone that had. It took a couple of hours to repair the damage. After that I took four 14 foot two by fours and put them across three beams. Then on top of those more two by fours forming a grid. Then I put the plywood on top of the top two by fours. That held my weight for the rest of the day. We were able to get the rest of the roof repaired except for

one last sheet. I will have to come back, if Ralph will let me, to finish the last one.

I feel much more confident that I can build my greenhouse. The tricks I have learned and the mistakes I have made will prevent me from falling through my roof when it is time to finish my greenhouse. Thanks Ralph, again I am sorry about your plants. When I got home that night the first thing my wife said was what happened to your lip. I just shook my head and said nothing.

**Anonymous video** - Of the orchid genus *Catasetum*, Charles Darwin wrote: "I never was more interested in any subject in all my life than in this of Orchids." The male flowers in this genus evolved an unusual pollination program. They propel a package of pollen onto the backs of visiting bees. The bees endure the blow (which would be like a 150-pound person getting hit with a few bowling balls) in exchange for orchid aromas that the bees use to attract mates. Watch the video on this action <http://www.sciencefriday.com/videos/watch/10370>

### 2011 Orchid Calendar

Date	Event	Location	Comments
05/12/11	Carmel Valley Garden Show	Hidden Valley Music Seminars 88 W. Carmel Valley Rd	9-4pm <a href="http://www.carmelorchidsociety.org">www.carmelorchidsociety.org</a>
05/12/11	FCOS monthly meeting	Arroyo Grande Women's Club	7:30pm
06/03/05	San Jose Orchid Exposition	Miraido Village Club House 550 N. Sixth St. S.J.	More Info: <a href="http://realorchidgrowers.com">realorchidgrowers.com</a>